

Complaint Inspection SOP

For the WPC FOS Staff

March 2013

General Guidelines:

The Bureau of Water, Division of Water Pollution Control will follow the Illinois EPA complaint response and follow-up procedures at all times. All complaints received by the DWPC/FOS will be categorized and recorded into the existing Regional complaint tracking systems, such as, complaint number; date received; category of complaint (SSO, CAFO, CSO, unpermitted discharge, etc.); and FOS response and date (field investigation, enforcement recommendation, referral to local or other State agency, etc.). Complaints received will be evaluated at the time of receipt for the appropriate response and timely action. Some complaints will require an immediate or same day response, depending on the nature of the complaint.

Complaints received from a third party, referred from within the Agency via the website, will be acknowledged within five (5) working days by phone contact with the person reporting the information or complainant. The complaint is considered to be acknowledged when a regional field staff is the one taking the initial information.

The acknowledgment will consist of an initial assessment of whether the complaint falls within the Agency's jurisdiction and a commitment to investigate the complaint or refer it to the proper Agency for investigation (if the complainant so desires).

All complaints will be investigated and appropriate follow-up action taken consistent with the actual or potential impacts on health and the environment, Agency resources, and program priorities.

The priority of investigation will consider the potential for impacts on health and the environment, including a judgment of the validity of the complaint. Situations which appear to have a high probability of environmental impact will be investigated as quickly as reasonably possible. Complaints which appear to involve such things as nuisance conditions or a low probability of environmental impact would generally receive a lower priority. Time frames for response to Agency management will also affect priorities.

The investigation may include a field visit. Although in some cases telephone inquiries will provide the needed information. The complainant may be contacted in the field when necessary to complete the investigation. Also, the investigation should be coordinated with other Agency staff or other agencies which may be involved such as local governments or health departments.

Violations of water pollution control laws and regulations discovered during complaint investigations will receive follow-up appropriate compliance activities response. Cooperation will be provided with other agencies involved in the follow-up, and activities should be coordinated as necessary.

Complaint Response:

Investigation of any complaint identified as significant and having the potential for immediate impact on health, the environment and may constitute a violation of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act, CWA, and promulgated IPCB Regulations will begin at the time it is received. Complaints that are identified not having an immediate threat to health and the environment will be responded to within five (5) working days of receipt by field office staff. The initiation of the WPC FOS investigation will begin at the time the Regional staff becomes aware of the complaint. The complainant and the alleged polluter will be contacted as early as possible within the above timeframe. The complaint receipt and record of the investigation and disposition will be entered in the Regional office database and the permanent field office and Agency files.